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TO THE "LONDON TIMES."

BY

DOCTOR RAFAEL SEIJAS, LL.D.

(TRANSLATED FROM THE SPANISH.)

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ATLANTA, GA.:
Franklin Printing & Publishing Company,
GEO. W. HARRISON, Manager.
1896.

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INTRODUCTION.

The following is a translation of an article which appeared in the *Diario* of Caracas, of the 25th November last. It is from the pen of DOCTOR RAFAEL SEIJAS, the eminent Venezuelan jurist and diplomat, and is a fair and dispassionate presentation of the merits of the boundary dispute between that country and British Guiana. Although the paper antedates the President's special message of December last, and the subsequent unanimous acting of the U. S. Congress in harmony therewith, it is none the less interesting at this time, when the people of this country are eagerly seeking reliable information touching the antecedents of the Venezuelan case.

WILLIAM L. SCRUGGS.

January, 1896.

TO "THE LONDON TIMES."

In the "*London Times*" of October 12th last we find, under the heading of "England and Venezuela," an editorial wherein its author discusses the pending boundary question between said countries.

The high standard of the *Times*, the credit it enjoys, its importance, the interests represented by it, and the inspiration it receives in certain cases, oblige us to regard this publication as an important one and its editorial utterances as well worthy of consideration.

We shall, therefore, ignore other English publications and discuss this one with the intention of making clear to impartial minds whatever value it may have in view of its antecedents.

The publication in question has been occasioned by a communication, mentioned as a very lengthy one, from the Government of the United States to the Government of Great Britain,* in which it is claimed that the history of the dispute is given and the principles directing the policy of the United States in such cases are expounded. It is claimed that such history has been drawn exclusively from Venezuelan sources; that it could not be answered without careful consideration of the facts and principles stated in it, and that in accordance with the traditions of Lord Salisbury's administration, it will receive all due consideration. Telegrams of later date assert that this communication has been sent to the Crown law officers for consideration. It may be reasonably inferred then that there is no truth in the probably absurd report, published by ill-informed newspaper men, stating that Lord Salisbury heard it read with impatience, his irritability going so far as to interrupt the reading of it.

* Mr. Olney's note of July last.

The *Times*, while pretending to give to England the right which is Venezuela's in the boundary question, ingeniously admits that the question has two sides, viz.: a question of right, and a question of transaction and convenience. It is argued that as Holland's successor by right of conquest, Great Britain is entitled to all the possessions of the former in Guiana, and that the fixation of the limit of this area is the point that has been in discussion for a century; that in 1795 the English took possession of it for a second time, and that under their supervision its limits were settled; that a British Lieutenant-Governor described, in 1804, the western limit somewhat vaguely as "being in the Spanish establishments on the Orinoco; and that lately arguments and documents have been collected to prove the eastern extreme limit of the Spanish establishments and at the same time those of the Dutch jurisdiction.

We must observe at this juncture, that if the Dutch Colony of Guiana was twice in the hands of the English by right of conquest, restitution was made by them to the former by the Treaty of Amiens in 1802, the third article of which says:

"His British Majesty will make restitution to the French Republic and its allies, to wit: *H. Catholic Majesty and the Batavian Republic, of all the possessions and colonies that belonged to them respectively and that may have been occupied or conquered by British forces during the war, exception being made of the Island of Trinidad and the Dutch possessions in the Ceylon Islands.*"

As in this Treaty of Peace there is no confirmation in favor of the English of the conquest of Dutch Guiana, but, on the contrary, its restitution to its former owner is agreed upon, it is evident that the English have no reason to lay any claims to it on account of said act of war, nor any right in dating the acquisition of that territory from 1795.

It was by the Treaty of London dated on the 14th of April, 1814, that England received a portion of the Dutch Colony of Guiana, to wit: "the settlements of Demerara, Essequibo and Berbice," which, according to Article 1st of said treaty, were excepted from the stipulation of restitution made therein,

and the completion and full cession of which to Her Britannic Majesty was confirmed in the second paragraph of the first additional article, in consideration of certain engagements contracted by England in favor of the Sovereign Prince of the Netherlands. This is the only title that Great Britain can lay claim to, since the conquests not confirmed by the Treaty of Peace have no legal value whatever.

Neither in this pact, nor in that of 1802, nor in any other, has the territory possessed by Holland ever been defined; moreover, no one gives those boundaries which "*The Times*" asserts were defined under English supervision.

We cannot understand how the English, who were not then the owners but the military occupants, could have the power to increase the territory, nor to fix the boundaries with other nations, which under no circumstances can be made *ex parte* but only in accordance with the rightful adjacent possessor or by a lawful award. If the English succeeded the Dutch, they must have acquired the latter's own rights and at the same time remain bound to all obligations contracted by them. Now, the Treaty of Münster, of 1648, by which the Dutch usurpations of Spanish territory in America were legalized, prohibited the Dutch from navigating or trading in towns, villages, establishments where there were markets, fortifications, or castles, or in any other possessions of the other contracting party.

It is only since 1880 that the English Government has pretended "*by virtue of old treaties with the native tribes*" and "subsequent cessions made by Holland," to draw a boundary line beginning at a point on the mouth of the Orinoco west of Point Barima, following a southerly course to the Inataca Mountains, thence to the northwest through the Santa Maria Highlands just south of Upata as far as the chain on the eastern border of the Caroni, thence to the south as far as the great range of the Guiana District, and to the south again as far as the Pacaraima mountains.

But what was the date of those "treaties" made with the native tribes? Which were the lands obtained from them? By

what authority did they alienate said lands? We have been unable to find out. No trace of them are discovered in any official collection of Great Britain's treaties.

We were ignorant of the fact that before the first restitution of Dutch Guiana to the Netherlands in 1783, or at the time of the second in 1802, or during its military occupation by the English since 1803, the latter territory had been increased by the alleged Indian cessions.

There is, however, an indisputable point, viz: neither Lord Aberdeen, nor Lord Granville, nor Lord Rosebery, nor any other Secretary of Foreign Affairs of Great Britain has ever made mention of any other titles save those obtained from Holland.

It is stated that Sir R. Schomburgk, in 1840, defined the boundary line known by his name, which divides almost in two equal parts the territory now disputed by the Governments of Great Britain and Venezuela; and that the subsequent agreement of 1850 was a contract between both Governments to regard as neutral the territory of the disputed area, which, until a decision upon their mutual pretensions was arrived at, should not be usurped by either of the two parties.

We believe ourselves authorized to protest against this dictatorial assertion in regard to the dividing in halves of the disputed territory, and equally authorized to affirm that the Schomburgk line of 1840 represents the total pretensions of Great Britain.

The commission given by Her British Majesty to Sir R. H. Schomburgk was to draw the chart of the limits between British Guiana and Venezuela and to mark them out. We have before us the chart attached to the pamphlet then published under the title of "Sketch of a Map of British Guiana by Sir Robert H. Schomburgk." Three lines are shown on it, one pink, one green, and one yellow, with the explanation that the first one shows the "boundary as claimed by Great Britain," the second one "the boundary as claimed by Venezuela," and the third shows the Brazilian pretensions.

The same color lines are found in the German work published in Leipzig, in 1841, by O. A. Schomburgk under the

title of "Travels of Robert Herman Schomburgk during the years 1835 to 1839 in Guiana and the Orinoco, according to his Reports and communications to the London Geographical Society, with a prologue by Alexander Von Humboldt, accompanied by some of his works on certain important astronomical positions in Guiana."

In these charts nothing is said about either extreme, medium, or minimum pretensions of Great Britain; only one is mentioned; at that time she had no others.

As a palpable proof of this, there stand the instructions given on March 18th, 1840, by the celebrated Lord Palmerston, who was not an ignorant person nor could he be called impartial when treating of the interests of his nation as judged by his own countrymen.

From the newspaper "The Argosy" of Demerara, Vol. 30, number 752, issued October 12th, 1895, we transcribe the following:

"At this moment, when the Schomburgk boundary line is being violently discussed, it will be of interest to read the following communication taken from a Parliamentary paper dated May 11th, 1840, as it gives the real object of the traveler's work:"

"FOREIGN OFFICE.

"March 18th, 1840.

"SIR:—Viscount Palmerston has ordered me to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 6th inst. and the enclosed copies and extracts from communications annexed thereto from Mr. Light, Governor of British Guiana, relating to the convenience of entering into such an agreement with the Governments of Brazil, Venezuela, and Holland as would accurately define the limits of British Guiana.

"Referring to that part of your letter in which it is stated that Lord John Russell deems it important that the limits of British Guiana be investigated and agreed upon, if possible, and that Mr. Schomburgk's investigations in those parts have made him particularly apt to be useful in case the services of a person familiar with the geography of British Guiana be re-

quired to fix the limits of the British territory, I must say that the proceeding that Lord Palmerston would suggest for the consideration of Sir John Russell would be that a map be drawn of British Guiana in accordance with the limits described by Mr. Schomburgk; that a report be sent containing a minute description of the natural characteristics, defining and constituting the questioned limits, and that similar copies of said map and reports be submitted to the Government of Venezuela, Brazil, and Holland as an exposition of British pretensions. That in the meantime an English commissioner be sent to mark the boundaries in the territory, in order to designate by permanent posts the boundary line thus claimed by Great Britain. Then it would devolve upon each of these Governments to present any objection they may make against these limits, with an exposition of the basis of their claims, and then Her Majesty's Government would give the answers deemed just and proper."

Although the course recommended was a most extraordinary one, yet it was, in part, followed in 1841, and it was due to the well founded complaints of Dr. Fortique, Minister of Venezuela in London, that Lord Aberdeen ordered the removal of such marks, which, according to his explanation, did not constitute a true boundary, but only a pretension of what Great Britain claimed to be the limit.

If the first part of the plan was complied with, let us state at this juncture, that this cannot be said of the second part. We have examined all the matter that has been printed in this connection, and we have failed to find the suggested report of the exposition of Great Britain's titles. We have found, however, repeated proofs to show that this was concealed from Venezuela, to which country only vague assertions, devoid of particulars whatsoever, have been made and reiterated in writing.

But to return to our theme, namely; that until recent date there has been but one pretension of Great Britain, we will add that strong proof that such was the case lies in the fact of the negotiations conducted by Señor Fortique and Lord Aberdeen. It is a fact that to the propositions made by Venezuela

for the demarcation of limits by the Essequibo, Lord Aberdeen answered on the 20th of March, 1844, by making another proposition for a line starting at the coast, at the mouth of the Moroco, and ended by stating that such a transaction would entail the abandonment or cession in favor of the Republic of *the territory comprised between the mouth of the Moroco and the mouth of the Amacuro and the range of mountains where it has its source.*

Had England deemed her rights more extensive, surely then would have been the proper moment to make it known in its full extent, in order to enhance the merits of her "cession." But as she limited herself to what has been said, it is but natural to infer that she had no further pretensions; and that a statesman of Lord Aberdeen's astuteness could not have forgotten in this matter the interests of his nation.

A similar charge should be made against Lord Granville, who, upon his refusal to accept the frontier line as proposed by Dr. José Maria Rojas in 1881, and proposal to substitute for it another starting from a point twenty-nine miles from the mouth of the Barima to the east, was silent upon the further increase of British territory.

Lord Rosebery would have made the same error, when, in his first administration in 1866, he proposed to General Guzman Blanco to divide in two equal parts the lines drawn by Dr. Rojas and Lord Granville, but to leave the mouth of the Guaima river in English territory, as he attached great importance to the possession of this point, the cession of which by Venezuela to be compensated to by cession of territory in another part of Guayana.

It was in 1890, when, for the first time, Venezuela was informed that Great Britain had three lines, viz.: the Schomburgk line, which was then declared as not subject to discussion; another line including the mining district of Yuruary, which might be submitted to arbitration; and, lastly, a third line called "extreme limit," which Great Britain was ready to abandon, moved by friendly considerations, etc.

It is pertinent here to call to mind the fact that the Schom-

burgk line, adopted as the definite boundary since 1886, is not the same as that shown in Schomburgk's former maps, but another which takes in considerably more of the Venezuelan territory, as remarked by Señor Marco Antonio Saluzzo, Minister of Foreign Relations, in the preliminary exposition to the "Libro Amarillo" (*Yellow Book*) submitted to Congress in 1891, when the old frontier line and the new one attributed to Schomburgk were contrasted.

It seems very strange to us that an engineer, after having spent five years in exploring that territory, should have only such uncertain results that a total change should be necessary in the contents of his pamphlet in order to give the advantage to the Government which employed him.

Instead of those numberless proofs which Her Britannic Majesty's Government claims to have of their rights, there has been, up to the present time, only an advertisement published in the "London *Gazette*" of October 22d, 1886, wherein it is proclaimed that :

"Whereas, The limits of British Guiana, Her Majesty's Colony, are in dispute between Her Britannic Majesty's Government and the Government of Venezuela; and, whereas, Her British Majesty's Government has been informed that the Venezuelan Government has granted, or is about to grant, certain concessions of lands, within the territory claimed by Her Majesty's Governments, such titles will not be recognized nor admitted, and any person taking possession of said land, or pretending under said titles to perform any rights, shall be deemed guilty of trespass according to the laws of the Colony." It is added that in the Library of the Colonial Office, in Downing street, or in the Office of the Secretary of the Government of Georgetown, Demerara, British Guiana, "there may be seen a copy of a map showing the limits between British Guiana and Venezuela as claimed by Her Britannic Majesty's Government.

In 1890 it was declared to Dr. Modesto Urbaneja, agent for Venezuela, that Her Britannic Majesty's Government could not admit as satisfactory any arrangement wherein the territory

lying within the line drawn by Sir R. Schomburgk was not admitted as English possessions; and to Dr. Lucio Pulido, who succeeded Dr. Urbaneja, it was said that: "Her British Majesty's Government could not allow its rights to the territory lying within the line explored by Schomburgk to be disputed."

Later on a line was indicated to Dr. Lucio Pulido, "starting from Point Mocomoco and the river Guaima, and touching at the west the Amacuro river; that the frontier line (thus proposed in exchange or compensation) should follow the course of the Uruan (Yuran) river, from its junction with the Cuyuni, and could be extended to the Usupamo range and to the Riconoto range of mountains."

At the last moment, Dr. Lucio Pulido was informed by official communication that: "Her Britannic Majesty's Government, desirous to negotiate directly with the Venezuelan Government for the establishment of a frontier reciprocally advantageous and approaching as near as possible the natural boundaries, would extend to the southeast the line proposed by Sir Thomas Sanderson, starting at the Mocomoco cape, and that they would desist from all pretensions to any compensation on account of the restitution of the mouths of the Orinoco and adjacent territories."

In the last negotiation entrusted to Señor Tomas Michelena, Lord Rosebery modified the proposition for arbitration made by the Venezuelan agent, pretending that he should agree to the following: "That the disputed territory lies west of the line marked in the map sent to the Government of Venezuela on the 1st of March, 1890, and east of a line to be drawn on the said map, starting from the rise of the river Cumano, then following its course and the upward course of the river Arina along the Usupamo range."

The acceptance of this proposition would have been to legitimize the ever-increasing usurpations of the British, and to leave open to discussion the possession of a territory never before disputed to Venezuela. Señor Michelena very naturally refused most energetically and with weighty reasons to accept such unheard of pretensions, and, notwith-

standing his review of the antecedents of the question, among others the last promises made to Dr. Pulido, he could not move Lord Rosebery from the attitude he had taken, and the only reply obtained from him was that Señor Michelena's arguments "left no opening for any acceptable agreement."

Such is Great Britain's attitude at the present moment.

Venezuela could never have consented to recognize England's ownership of the disputed territory, because such a course would imply the renunciation of its sovereignty and its independence, thus remaining under the rule of another nation, its equal in law.

Between private individuals, one of the contending parties cannot end a litigation by simply awarding to himself the rights concerned, but must go to the Courts of Law in demand of a verdict which he is bound to respect and abide by.

Nations, however, have no common superior; hence the necessity of ending their controversies between themselves by mutual consent, either emanating from direct negotiations or from the verdict of an arbitrator which they agree to accept as an obligation contracted by a formal preliminary agreement. If between individuals no power to dictate is permissible, much less will this apply to nations.

For this reason Venezuela places no value whatever, either upon the original "Schomburgk line," nor on the second line of that name, which was unknown to her until 1890. Far from accepting either, she protested against the first from the day in which she became aware of its existence, and obtained from Great Britain the order for the removal of the posts erected to mark said line. Venezuela has protested against the acts oppressive to her rights performed by the English Government and by the Colony of Demerara, and has also taken other steps conducive to the preservation of said rights.

Can this be the offense that has exhausted the patience of Great Britain?

Since when has the fulfillment of the most sacred duties, the defense of one's own territory, been considered a crime?

We are accused of ingratitude when we are reminded that

Mr. Canning aided in the creation of these nationalities in order to re-establish the European balance of power!

We acknowledge that Great Britain then served the cause of justice by refusing to enter into the plans of the "Holy Alliance" against the spirit of innovation of the century; and by opposing the projects of Spain to reconquer her colonies in America; this being done by concurrence with the United States which had already proclaimed the Monroe Doctrine, and by entering, as did the United States six months previous, into a Treaty of Friendship, Commerce and Navigation with the Republic of Colombia.

This treaty gave English commerce unconditionally the privileges of "the most favored nation"; the equality of the flag was stipulated. Englishmen enjoyed the same privileges as the Colombians as regards succession to goods and chattels of all kinds and denominations, either by sale, donation, exchange or by bequest or otherwise, according to the administration of justice. Several franchises, or exemptions, were granted to them; and English and Colombian vessels were given equal privileges, the latter being required to be built in Colombia, which country was still in its infancy. Besides, England's concurrence was promised to aid in the abolition of the slave trade which the Supreme "Junta" of Venezuela had voluntarily suppressed since 1810. So hastily was this treaty concluded that the clause referring to its duration was omitted as well as other stipulations that have not yet been added to it, and it still subsists without any change after seventy years, which, according to Lord Granville, has made it obsolete. When Venezuela renewed this treaty in 1834 it was left just as it stood.

Since then Venezuela has accepted other pacts or agreements proposed by Great Britain in regard to postal conventions, extradition of fugitive criminals from the English West Indies, pecuniary claims, and, above all, the treaty of 1839 in regard to the abolition of the slave trade. By this treaty, the Republic agreed to maintain in force the Colombian law of 1825 declaring this trade an act of piracy punishable by death. In addition to all this, Venezuela, confiding in an illusory reciprocity, granted to England the right to visit in times of peace her

merchant vessels, a concession she has solicited in vain from other nations, notably from France and the United States. No limit was fixed to this agreement.

Venezuela has duly appreciated the personal co-operation given, during her war of independence, by brave Britons who generously shed their blood for their love of liberty, and O'Leary, MacGregor, D'Evereux, Minchin, Chitty, Wilson, Fergusson and many others, are the names of those who rest among our heroes in our National Pantheon.

Colombia carried its magnanimity to the extent of admitting, without the careful and proper investigation made indispensable by the repeated and enormous abuses made under the then prevailing circumstances, the claims for money, arms, ammunition, equipments and other supplies obtained in England for the needs in the struggle against Spain. Venezuela is even now paying, with the utmost promptness, what remains of that debt, which has been increased by subsequent loans, and the present Government is so careful upon this subject that not only the current dividends are paid up but at the same time arrears caused by the Revolution of 1892 are being settled by the payment of large sums of money.

English capital has been very profitably invested in the Caracas and La Guayra Railway and other railroads, also in works of improvements at La Guayra and in mines situated in Venezuelan territory.

The above mentioned facts ought to be more than sufficient to inspire Great Britain with a desire for the peace and progress of Venezuela, even putting aside the commercial relations between the two countries, which give employment to several lines of British steamers.

The Republic of Venezuela has given numerous proofs of its desire to maintain friendly relations with Great Britain, but it is the latter who opposes this end.

England advanced surreptitiously upon Venezuelan territory, but since 1884 she has carried on her plans openly. Since then she has entered into forbidden places; has appointed commissaries; raised the English flag upon buildings; has taken prisoner,

brought to trial and punished a Venezuelan official; has sent to that territory armed police to proclaim British Sovereignty by posters affixed to the trees; has issued decrees prohibiting commerce and the patrolling by the Revenue Cutters of the territory between Barima and the Amacuro; has included these places under the jurisdiction of the Government of Demerara; has authorized the developement of mines comprised within the territory of the Republic, and has continued performing in the territories thus invaded other acts of jurisdiction.

Notwithstanding this, the British Legation in Caracas declared in 1850 to the Venezuelan Government that Her Britannic Majesty had no "intention either to occupy or to encroach upon the disputed territory"; and then asked and obtained from the Venezuelan Executive a similar surety, thus entering into an agreement effected by diplomatic notes.

Great Britain, even after her advances upon the territory since 1884, which *de facto* made the agreement void, has nevertheless deemed this agreement as in force. It was not until 1893, when, for the first time, information was conveyed through Señor Michelena that the situation existing by virtue of this agreement could not be restored, as Venezuela had violated its provisions.

If this violation took place before Great Britain had released herself from her obligations she should have complained of said violation and demanded the fulfillment of the agreement or else denied it in case her claim was not heeded.

Be it as it may, either such agreement is yet binding, and then Great Britain by her conduct has violated it, or it has become void, and in that case Venezuela is not debarred from occupying what she considers her own territory.

Venezuela has consistently and persistently protested against these encroachments, and demanded the evacuation of the disputed lands; but Great Britain, instead of evacuating them, has claimed them as her indisputable property, not subject to arbitration, and advanced unheard of pretensions to other portions of Venezuelan territory, which last, however, she graciously agrees to submit to arbitration.

We are now told that the historical British rights have been strengthened by the recent possession of the territory. We well know the value the English give to this, their old saying that "*possession is nine points of the law*," having become a proverb.

But justice cannot admit that the mere fact of holding a thing is equivalent to the ownership of it. If there be no owner, such proceedings may obtain the force of proprietorship, but not, however, if there be an owner, or if the ownership be in dispute, which is an equivalent case.

Let us pass, then, the argument of ownership by right of occupancy.

In regard to a cession, let us state that such an act implies the performance of an agreement to such an end, and no such agreement exists between Venezuela and Great Britain. Nor is there room for the argument of right of conquest, as this presupposes a war which has not taken place, much less confirmation of such rights by a final treaty of peace.

Such possession could not be admissible even as obtained by prescription, since, according to certain opinions, it is not recognized by the Laws of Nations, and according to others it only applies to immemorial prescriptions. In the present case, such prescription is alleged to have begun in 1884, that is, *eleven years ago*.

At all events, the possession preceding the prescription must be a legitimate one resulting from deeds that could be transferred.

Force, clandestine acts, and uncertainty make it void.

This British possession by prescription falls under the head of force ; and to quote the writers: "One century of unlawful possession is not sufficient to obliterate the defects such possession may have had in its beginning."

It is well known that even in the case of legitimate possession, any claims of a former owner against it, are a hindrance to such possession, thus destroying the presumption of abandonment, which certain writers endeavor to show is involved in it and justifies it. Venezuela has never abandoned her territory ;

nor has she been negligent in this matter. Her direct claims since 1841, made to the British Government, and to the Governor of Demerara, her persistency, her continued protests, have echoed all over the world.

The essential requisite of prescription is its peaceful character; possession based on violence is not admitted, no matter how old it may be, as the farther back it dates, the deeper the wound inflicted upon the law. There are those who think that this right of might changes the condition of affairs; that it warrants the prescription, but only in case that after cessation of compulsion the dispossessed owner, being at liberty to claim his rights, fails to claim them and remains passive.

This has not been, nor is it now, Venezuela's case.

Violence prevails and threatens to continue and extend itself more and more. "The TIMES" states that the terms which Lord Aberdeen might have accepted in 1848 would have been impossible in 1850; that the agreement of 1850 was insufficient in 1880; *that in 1886 the necessity for proclaiming the absolute right of Great Britain to all the territory included within the "Schomburgk line" became evident*; that they still claim as the heirs of Holland the extreme limit of the flow of all the rivers entering into the Essequibo; but that there is a disposition to submit to arbitration the frontier between this limit and the "Schomburgk line"; that no question derogatory to British jurisdiction could be admitted, but that in a few years no arbitration can be admitted upon any part of her rightful boundary line!

According to this, if since 1892 no check had been given to British intrusion, the Colony of Demerara might extend as far as the south of the town of Upata and the range of mountains on the east side of the Caroni, her extreme limit, according to old treaties with native tribes and subsequent cessions made by Holland, although in 1890 they graciously receded from this extreme claim in favor of Venezuela, and arbitration was adopted for an increase made in the already altered Schomburgk line.

This would be a very convenient means of settling boundary questions: By ordering the arbitrary erection of posts to mark the boundaries and to serve as a means of opening a

controversy on rights with the contiguous owner ; then closing the discussion without listening to the other party's arguments ; and later on to state that such boundaries are definite and cannot be removed. This same proceeding might be applied to the new line open to arbitration and finally to the extreme pretension which was only claimed, to be abandoned later on. The threats of "The TIMES" seem to point to this.

In reference to the Monroe Doctrine "The TIMES" says of it that its most ardent admirers had not believed that it could be applied to the establishments already in existence when it was proclaimed ; that Great Britain has no pretensions to a new territory but only to what Holland possessed, from whom she took them by conquest, and that this is the point to be determined ; *that if it were not conclusively shown that these limits are not as extensive as have been claimed by successive English Governments*, then there might be grounds for a controversy taking said Doctrine for a basis, and to find out its true value, as it lacks the sanction of international recognition, though it be popular on the American Continent.

This hypothesis just suits the circumstances of the discussion. Venezuela maintains that Holland did not possess all that territory that England claims as its successor. This assertion is based upon countless proofs. England has advanced her stations along the borders of the Orinoco as far as the Amacuro. Here we have an argument contrary to Great Britain's pretensions. General P. W. Netscher, a Dutchman, in his history of the Colonies of Essequibo, Demerara and Berbice, published in 1888, after having made an inspection of the official archives of his country, emphatically affirms that the Netherlands did not extend to the Amacuro, not even to the Barima, and that the pretensions of the English heirs upon this point are not founded.

Other authorities also agree that in 1814, when the cession of the Colonies was made to England, the Dutch had no possessions west of the Essequibo.

We shall only add in regard to "the Yuruan incident," that Venezuela does not consider as British possessions the terri-

tory occupied by an English station on the right margin of the Cuyuni opposite the Yuruan débouchure, even if it be included within the so-called second "Schomburgk line." If the Republic protested so loudly against the first line of that name, and obtained from Lord Aberdeen, in 1842, the removal of the posts, how could she accept the second line extended in a manner as capricious and unjustifiable as the first?

In this grave conflict, Venezuela has appealed to her sisters on this continent, and particularly to the United States of America. On all sides she has had the sympathy of friendly Governments, and public opinion has made known through the proper channels its friendly feeling for her. The joint resolution passed by the American Congress as suggested by its President, and the American press, which for the last few months has been unanimous in favor of the peaceful and honorable solution of this controversy, all give manifest proof that the merits of Venezuela's cause are such that she has the sympathies of all, which fact, the English both in the mother country and in the Colony of Demerara cannot but recognize.

Great Britain as a first-class power, with certain interests in Venezuela, would have a more exalted position should she, obedient to the voice of Justice, retrace her steps taken since 1884, and place the matter upon the same basis of the discussion initiated in 1841 by Lord Aberdeen; continued by Lord Granville in 1881, 1884, and 1885, and with Lord Rosebery, during his first administration in 1886. By this means the friendly relations between the two nations would be renewed, and with them the profitable intercourse dependent upon them, and the disputed territory in its entirety would be submitted to arbitration as it should be without excluding that portion which Great Britain has declared to be her own and the possession of which she enjoys since 1888.

RAFAEL SEIJAS.







